

SECRETARY JOHANN'S' 2007 FARM BILL FORUM
HUSKER HARVEST DAYS
GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA
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Statement by RICHARD C. HAHN, Omaha, Nebraska

Mr. Secretary, my name is Richard C. Hahn, and I live in Omaha, Nebraska. I recently retired as President and CEO of Farmers National Company, after 19 years in that position. I was raised on a farm in Madison County, Nebraska, and have been involved in agribusiness for over 41 years. My love is in agriculture and improving its income and its contribution to the welfare of the country.

Today I speak on behalf of the *25 X '25 Agricultural Energy Alliance*. I serve as a member of their steering committee. This committee is comprised of agricultural leaders from across the country, which includes people from production agriculture, agribusiness, and agricultural organizations.

Our vision is that agriculture could potentially provide 25 percent of the total energy consumed in the United States by the year 2025, while continuing to produce abundant, safe, and affordable food and fiber.

The broad spectrum of energy sources we are including in this vision, beyond ethanol and biodiesel, is wind, solar, methane generated from livestock waste, and biomass.

With the dramatic escalation of energy costs, these sources have grown to be much more attractive. We all know the cost of our growing dependency on foreign oil and the volatility of regions where it comes from. I also want to emphasize that this would also strengthen the income of the farmers, and revitalize rural communities.

United States agriculture faces increasing competition from expanding production capacity of other countries, and their lower production costs. This would supply another market for our crops, and would be very beneficial to our economy. This market would certainly be very welcomed, both by the farmers and the consumers of energy.

AMERICA'S FARMERS, RANCHERS, FORESTERS AND PROCESSERS CAN:

- Provide ever-increasing volumes of transportation fuels, primarily ethanol and biodiesel
- Provide the land for wind generators and locations for solar energy panels
- Convert animal and food processing wastes into methane generated fuel for engines
- Provide America with cleaner energy and lower energy costs

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Replace dependency on OPEC with home-grown energy, increasing our energy security
- Provide an additional market for our major crops – corn and soybeans, and also sugarcane, beets, switch-grass, and other crops
- Provide a use for animal wastes, in addition to fertilizing cropland
- Provide a market for processing wastes of cooking oil would decrease the demand on municipal sewage systems
- Provide environmental benefits, such as cleaner air, and decreased risk of water pollution
- Increase farm income and reduce the dependency on government programs
- Provide economic benefits to revitalize rural communities

My comments have touched several of the questions you asked to be addressed at this forum. We believe the 2007 Farm Bill should include a focal point on renewable energy. The energy title should be strengthened. Energy conservation and production provisions should be woven into all appropriate titles. A Mission Statement of your department should include the production of energy.

We strongly believe that American agriculture can power our future. We are hopeful that the 2007 Farm Bill and the leadership of USDA would embrace and support the vision being advanced by the *25 X '25 Agricultural Energy Alliance*. We believe 25 percent of energy from agriculture by the year 2025 is an aggressive, but achievable goal. We have confidence that with your leadership, and that of President Bush and the U.S. Congress, the 25 by '25 vision can be achieved.